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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the expectations of second semester teacher education students regarding the selected standards of education, related teaching tasks, and the goals of education. Eighty-one second semester students starting on their second field experience completed the Inventory of Perceptions and Expectations (IPE) prior to beginning their public school visitations. They were asked to determine the importance of eighteen statements which reflect the standards and norms usually identified by practice and research as indicators of effective teaching. For each standard a corresponding teaching task was identified and respondents were asked to identify their level of self-confidence in performing each of these tasks. Finally, they were asked to rank order three general goals of education: student self-concept; student achievement; and positive classroom climate. Findings indicated that although interns are positive that the standards of teaching are important, they are less confident of their ability to perform related teaching tasks. The results are discussed, and data from the IPE instrument are displayed in tables. (JD)

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SECOND SEMESTER TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS
OF SELECTED STANDARDS AND TASKS OF TEACHING

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INTRODUCTION

An important aspect of current research on the concerns of beginning teachers focuses on the impact of the unrealistic expectations and role perceptions neophytes have upon entering their first teaching position. Such research suggests that new teachers feel their own initial expectations contribute to their reality shock or transition. They expect too much of themselves, their students, and of teaching itself (Childers & Podemski, 1983). Teacher induction programs attempt to circumvent this shock through inservice training and mentoring. However, a long range approach to the problem of reality shock of new teachers may be inherent in teacher education programs themselves. Wiersma suggests, for instance, that reality training in early field experiences will help to quicken student approximation to the practitioner's frame of reference (Wiersma, 1971). Teacher education programs can enable students to view the "real world" of the classroom by encouraging realistic expectations of life in the public schools. As part of a longitudinal study, this paper examines just what expectations second semester teacher education students have regarding selected standards of education, related teaching tasks and their perceptions of the goals of education in general.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The review of the literature addresses those studies which assess the perceptions and expectations of Teacher Education Program (TEP) students. Applegate and Lasley (1985) find that most research on the effects of field experiences is somewhat limited, focusing primarily on student teaching. However, Scherer reports that early field experiences positively affect the TEP student's self-concept. Nevertheless, Sunal finds that early field experiences do not appear to make a significant difference in the TEP student's perceptions of teaching behavior and role expectations (found in Applegate and Lasley, 1985).

TEP students do seem to have different perceptions of problem areas in teaching than do experienced teachers. A Northern Illinois University study, reports that the seven greatest teaching problems identified by TEP students are also identified by experienced teachers, but the two groups place different degrees of importance on the seven concerns. For example, inexperienced teachers identify disciplining students as the most important concern while experienced teachers place it seventh among the seven most important problem areas (Harrison and Westerman, 1974).

The socialization of TEP students into the teaching profession is another dimension in the study of TEP students' perceptions and expectations of teaching standards and norms. Lortie (1975) reports that teachers are socialized to the process of teaching by the thousands of hours they spend as students and by the role model K-12 teachers provide. He says this "internship of observation" is, for the most part, unconsciously internalized (Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1983).

The liberalizing effect of teacher education course work, according to Jacobs (1968) and Muuss (1969), begins reversing during the student teaching experience and continues to reverse and become more traditional during the first years of teaching (found in Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1983). Gibson (1976) supports this view and in his study finds that the perspectives of TEP students shift from idealism to survival through three consecutive field experiences.

In approaching a longitudinal study of TEP students, educational literature alerts us to areas of importance. The forces that shape the future teacher are both complex and subtle. Yet, more research on just how this shaping takes place will help to determine the focus that TEP programs should take in the future. Examination of the TEP student's perceptions and expectations of teaching standards and norms is a viable method of investigation to secure further data on teacher education.

METHOD AND INSTRUMENTATION

Eighty-one second semester teacher education students embarking on their second field experience completed the instrument Inventory of Perceptions and Expectations (IPE) prior to beginning their public school visitations.

The IPE asks subjects to determine the importance of eighteen statements which reflect the standards and norms usually identified by practice and research as indicators of effective teaching. Each standard was rated on a 1-4 scale, 1 representing most important, 2 important, 3 less important and 4 least important. For each standard a corresponding teaching task was identified. Respondents were asked to identify their level of self-confidence in performing each of these tasks using a 1-4 scale, 1 representing most confident, 2 confident, 3 less confident and 4 least confident. Finally, respondents were asked to rank order three general goals of education; student self-concept, student achievement and positive classroom climate. These goals were originally identified in a study by Book, Byers and Freeman (1983).

The IPE related directly to current educational research and practice. Sections one and two reflect standards and concurrent teaching tasks of the teaching profession; that is, those goals, objectives, or criteria of education expressed philosophically as ideals of excellence and identified as areas of competence (Dictionary of Education, 1973). The Virginia Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (1985) was a major source of items for this section of the IPE. The orientation of this program focuses on teacher competency and identifies fourteen competency areas. Each area includes specific teacher behaviors which demonstrate the individual's ability to translate knowledge into appropriate classroom practice. The IPE represents a reworking of the competency areas of the Virginia Teacher Assistance Program to reflect statements which express standards of the teaching profession.

RESULTS

In order to determine the perceptions and expectations of second semester teacher education students, the means, standard deviations and

rankings of the importance of selected standards of teaching and self-confidence in performing related teaching tasks were computed using SAS (Table 1). Table 2 represents the means, standard deviations, and rankings of students' perceptions of three goals of education. Correlations between the importance of standards of teaching and self-confidence in performing related teaching tasks are in Table 3. The most important and least important standards of teaching as reflected by the IPE are presented in Table 4. The teaching tasks students felt most confident in performing and those they felt least confident in performing are found in Table 5.

DISCUSSION

Discussion of the results of the first implementation of the IPE must be tentative. It is designed to survey students as they progress through their teacher education program in order to assess changes in their perceptions and expectations regarding teaching. Since only one group, second semester teacher education students, are represented in this study, discussion is limited. These students have completed one field experience in the public schools and have taken a general education course.

Not surprisingly, second semester teacher education students view the standards of teaching, in general as important. As seen in Table 1, all but three of the standards were rated between most important and important. The three standards rated less than important were 1) use of standardized tests, 2) use of educational literature, and 3) monitoring learning. Students identified affective climate ($M=1.1$) as the most important standard. That students ranked positive classroom climate as the most important goal of education (Table 2) corresponds favorably with this item. Use of standardized tests ($M=2.9$) was rated as the least important standard. Interns in this study seem to have an especially high regard for those areas of teaching that deal with a positive accepting classroom environment.

Although interns are positive that the standards of teaching are important, they are less confident in their ability to perform related teaching tasks. In general, mean scores for these items were higher, indicating less confidence than mean scores for the importance of the standards. Nevertheless, almost half of the mean scores of the standards of teaching were close to 1.7. Those for related teaching tasks were close to 1.9. The use of standardized tests again appears as not only the least important standard of teaching ($M=2.9$), but also the area in which students feel least confident in performing ($M=2.6$). This lack of confidence and importance for this standard seems to be born out by the fact that as a goal of education (Table 2) student achievement received the lowest ranking.

There were moderate correlations between the importance of the standards of teaching and self-confidence in performing related tasks (Table 3). Ten of the eighteen items were statistically significant, seven at an alpha level of .05 and three at an alpha level of .01. There seems to be a relationship between how important interns perceive the standards and how capable they feel in performing related teaching tasks. The more important interns feel a standard is, the more confident they feel in their ability to implement it in their teaching, whereas the less important a standard, the less confidence they feel in its performance. For instance, the standards and tasks related to standardized tests correlated ($r=.36$) at an alpha level

of .01. That students neither appreciate this standard ($M=2.9$) nor feel capable of implementing it ($M=2.6$) is not surprising. At this point of their development, interns have not yet dealt with this topic in depth. On the other hand, the correlation ($M=.37$) between the standard ($M=1.7$) and task ($M=1.9$) of using a variety of teaching methods was also statistically significant at the alpha level of .01. In this case, however, integrating and using a variety of teaching methods, instructional activities and media is a major topic in the general methods course interns had taken the previous semester. In addition, during their public school visitations, interns were often given opportunities to prepare a variety of materials and plan diverse instructional activities.

Table 4 reports the means, standard deviations, and rankings by the interns of the most important and least important standards of teaching and their relationship to the three goals of education. Positive classroom climate was ranked as the most important of these three goals. This perception is reinforced since three of the six standards considered most important are associated with this goal. The remaining three standards students perceive as most important are associated with student self-concept, the goal students rank second. In examining the teaching tasks interns feel most and least confident in performing and their relationship to the three goals of education (Table 5), we see that those tasks related to the educational goals of student self-concept and positive classroom climate emerge again as important areas. Enhancing learner self-concept appears to be both an important standard to interns (Table 4) as well as an area of confidence. The educational goal of student achievement appears once in relation to the task of writing and using questions to facilitate student participation. Since questioning skills are covered thoroughly in the general methods course, students seem to have a feel both for their importance (Table 1) and confidence in actually implementing them (Table 5). Of interest are those standards of teaching rated least important (Table 4) and those related teaching tasks rated as least competent areas (Table 5). As these students progress through their teacher education program, it remains to be seen if there will be a shift in these areas.

In conclusion, this study represents a first step in acquiring data concerning the shaping of perceptions and expectations of teacher education students as they progress in their TEP. Their experiences as interns in the public school setting with increasing instructional responsibility, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes reflected in their methods courses, and their maturing as adults are but a few of the intervening variables. How these perceptions and expectations of selected standards of teaching and related teaching tasks shift and change over time represents a challenging area of research.

TABLE 1

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND RANKINGS OF THE
IMPORTANCE OF STANDARDS OF TEACHING AND SELF-CONFIDENCE IN
PERFORMING RELATED TEACHING TASKS

STANDARDS	MEAN	STD DEV	RANK	MEAN	STD DEV	RANK
ACADEMIC LEARNING TIME	2.0	.56	15	2.1	.61	17
STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY	2.0	.61	15	1.8	.61	6
CLARITY OF INSTRUCTION	1.5	.65	7	2.0	.63	15
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES	1.4	.58	6	1.9	.67	14
INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES	1.8	.70	13	1.9	.71	14
EVALUATION OF OBJECTIVES	1.8	.65	13	2.1	.65	17
CONSISTENT CLASSROOM RULES	1.3	.61	3	1.8	.64	6
AFFECTIVE CLIMATE	1.1	.34	1	1.9	.80	14
LEARNER SELF-CONCEPT	1.3	.47	3	1.6	.56	1
RELEVANCY OF LEARNING	1.4	.53	6	1.9	.66	14
INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	1.7	.57	11	1.9	.65	14
VARIETY OF METHODS	1.7	.63	11	1.9	.73	14
USE OF EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE	2.2	.76	17	1.9	.75	14
USE OF STANDARDIZED TESTS	2.9	.62	18	2.6	.65	18
REINFORCEMENT	1.7	.64	11	1.8	.64	6
MONITORING LEARNING	2.2	.66	17	1.8	.59	6
QUESTIONING TECHNIQUE	1.6	.60	8	1.8	.62	6
WITHITNESS	1.4	.58	6	1.9	.69	14

TABLE 2

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND RANKINGS OF THREE GOALS OF EDUCATION

GOALS	MEAN	STD DEV	RANK
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	2.5	.71	3
STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT	1.8	.77	2
POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE	1.7	.75	1

TABLE 3

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE IMPORTANCE OF STANDARDS OF TEACHING AND
SELF-CONFIDENCE IN PERFORMING RELATED TEACHING TASKS

STANDARD/PERFORMANCE	r
ACADEMIC LEARNING TIME	.23 *
STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY	.18
CLARITY OF INSTRUCTION	.27 *
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES	.10
INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES	.27 *
EVALUATION OF OBJECTIVES	.28 *
CONSISTENT CLASSROOM RULES	.20
AFFECTIVE CLIMATE	.09
LEARNER SELF-CONCEPT	.25
RELEVANCY OF LEARNING	-.03
INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	.25 *
VARIETY OF METHODS	.37 **
USE OF EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE	.34 **
USE OF STANDARDIZED TESTS	.36 **
REINFORCEMENT	.24 *
MONITORING LEARNING	.13
QUESTIONING TECHNIQUE	.23 *
WITHITNESS	.03

*p .05

**p .01

TABLE 4

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND RANKINGS OF THE MOST IMPORTANT
AND LEAST IMPORTANT STANDARDS OF TEACHING AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP
TO THREE GOALS OF EDUCATION

MOST IMPORTANT STANDARDS:

STANDARDS	MEAN	STD DEV	RANK	GOAL
AFFECTIVE CLIMATE	1.1	.34	1	POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE*
CONSISTENT CLASSROOM RULES	1.3	.61	3	POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE
LEARNER SELF-CONCEPT	1.3	.47	3	STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT
WITHITNESS	1.4	.58	6	POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE
RELEVANCY OF LEARNING	1.4	.53	6	STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES	1.4	.58	6	STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT

LEAST IMPORTANT STANDARDS:

STANDARDS	MEAN	STD DEV	RANK	GOAL
MONITORING LEARNING	2.2	.66	17	POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE
USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LITERATURE	2.2	.76	17	POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE
USE OF STANDARDIZED TESTS	2.6	.62	18	STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT

* The following are the definitions of the three goals of education as used in this study.

POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE: A goal of education is to develop a positive classroom environment in which students learn to work and interact cooperatively with each other.

STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT: A goal of education is to help students develop a healthy self-concept.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: A goal of education is to design, present, and evaluate classroom instruction so that student achievement of academic goals is primary.

TABLE 5

RELATED TEACHING TASKS STUDENTS FEEL MOST CONFIDENT IN PERFORMING
AND RELATED TEACHING TASKS STUDENTS FEEL LEAST CONFIDENT IN
PERFORMING AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THREE GOALS OF EDUCATION

MOST COMPETENT AREAS:

RELATED TEACHING TASKS	MEAN	STD DEV	RANK	GOAL
LEARNER SELF-CONCEPT	1.6	.56	1	STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT*
CONSISTENT CLASSROOM RULES	1.8	.64	6	POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE
REINFORCEMENT	1.8	.64	6	POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE
STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY	1.8	.61	6	STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
MONITORING LEARNING	1.8	.59	6	POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE
QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES	1.8	.62	6	STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

LEAST COMPETENT AREAS:

RELATED TEACHING TASKS	MEAN	STD DEV	RANK	GOAL
ACADEMIC LEARNING TIME	2.1	.61	17	STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
EVALUATION BY OBJECTIVES	2.1	.65	17	STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
USE OF STANDARDIZED TESTS	2.6	.65	18	STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT

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STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: A goal of education is to design, present, and evaluate classroom instruction so that student achievement of academic goals is primary.

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